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AN ADDRESS

TO THE

FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR

OF THE

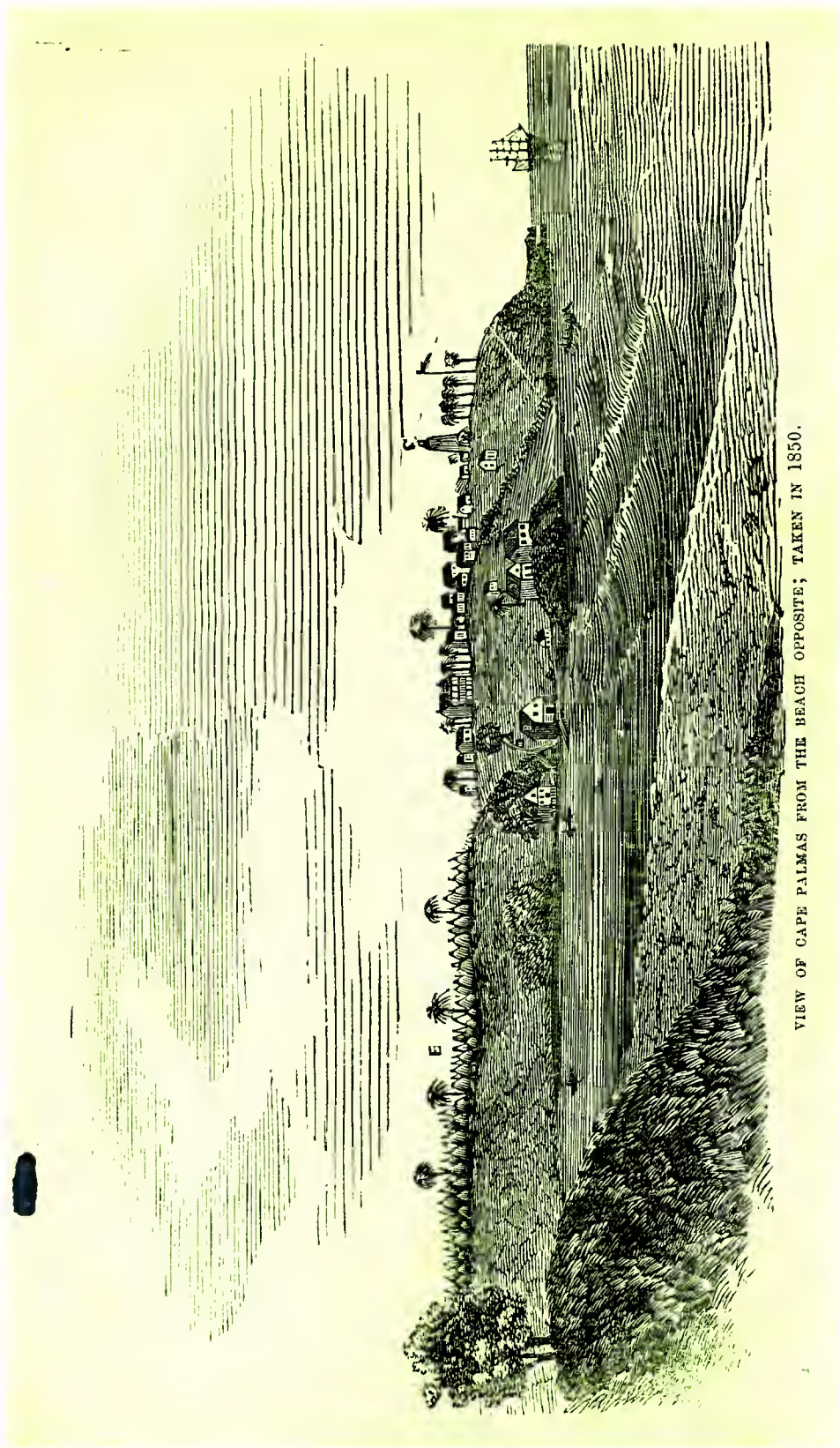
STATE OF MARYLAND,

BY JAMES HALL,

GENERAL AGENT OF THE MARYLAND STATE COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

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VIEW OF CAPE PALMAS FROM THE BEACH OPPOSITE; TAKEN IN 1850.

A N A D D R E S S
T O T H E
Free People of Color of the State of Maryland.

Introductory.

WHEN a person assumes the privilege of addressing another, or any body or class of people, upon matters appertaining to them, or affecting their interest, it is but proper that he assign some reasons for so doing, setting forth why he should feel any peculiar interest in their welfare, and also, wherefore he considers himself competent to counsel and advise. A brief sketch of the main incidents in the life of the writer, will, he hopes, be his sufficient apology for the liberty he now assumes, and also impress upon those he addresses a conviction of the honesty of his purpose, and in some degree, his ability to see clearly what may be considered as conducive to their best interests.

Near thirty years since he visited the Spanish Island of Cuba, and there became more or less acquainted with the condition of the people of color, both slave and free. He spent the winter of the subsequent year in Hayti, where he first saw the black man administering government, and performing all functions properly appertaining to Manhood. Circumstances, afterwards, placed him in Liberia, where he acted for some years as physician, then as founder and Governor of the Maryland settlement at Cape Palmas, and subsequently, as trader on the Liberian coast, among the natives and at the civilized settlements contiguous, embracing in all, a residence in Africa of about ten years. For eighteen years past he has held the office of General Agent of the Maryland State Colonization Society, and again, very recently, visited the different settlements in Liberia. During this long period, he has not only been intimate with people of color, the slave, the nominally and actually free, but his business, his correspondence and almost all the acts of his life have been, more or less, intimately connected with them; and 'tis no affectation of humanity to say, mainly devoted to their interests. And this, not from settled principles of action, or from any philanthropic motives, but from feelings engendered by long and agreeable intercourse, from repeated acts of kindness and hospitality he has ever experienced at their hands. He, therefore, considers, that there is not only no impropriety, but a peculiar pertinence in his addressing the free people of color of the State of Maryland at this time.

Having thus briefly introduced myself, I will drop the third person and for plainness and convenience address you personally.

At the outset, I will affirm, that the result of my long intercourse with the race to which you belong, the native African, the slave, and the free, in this and other lands, is a firm conviction, that, as a race—or a variety of the human species—you are capable of attaining the full stature of Manhood: not equalling some other varieties in intellectual power and ability, but surpassing others, and inferior to none in moral endowments and the capabilities for the rational enjoyment of human life. Did I believe otherwise, the counsel, I now propose to give, would be but an absurdity.

With capabilities for the highest, what is the position you now occupy? In a legal point of view, you are disfranchised, you cannot hold any office of trust or profit in the government. You have not the right of trial by a jury of your peers—your jurors are of your masters. Your testimony, where the property or person of a white man is concerned, is not admitted in any court. You are declared *not* citizens of the United States, or of any State, by a decision of the highest tribunal in the land. You are not allowed to take part in any election or vote for any office. You are not permitted to bear arms in defence of the country in which you live, or for personal protection. You are taxed for the support of a Government in which you can take no part, and of schools, from which your own children can receive no benefit—and lastly, you are subject to a special legislation, from time to time, further circumscribing your personal liberties in various ways. So much for your legal disabilities.

As to your social position, or I should say, degradation, for position in comparison with the white race, you have none, it would be useless to attempt a detail; it is in accordance with, or what might be expected from your legal disfranchisement. You are liable to insult and contumely at every step, and even your private dwellings are not sacred from intrusion and violence of lawless ruffianism; for, however aggravated a case may be, and ample the testimony of your own race, legal redress you have none; and where you meet with kindness and protection, the act and manner of its tender is often more humiliating to an independent mind, than actual cruelty or neglect, implying, as it does, your absolute dependence and inferiority.

Now, I appeal to you all, collectively and individually, are not these things so? And if so, what and where is the remedy, for I cannot believe you so lost to all sense of independence, manhood and self respect, that you are content to live and die in such a state of absolute inferiority. Is there hope of improvement in the future? To judge the future by the past—none. There are, doubtless, those among you who have cast a vote in the elections of the State, or who remember to have seen some of your people do it. Now, what greater absurdity could be imagined than for a black man to present himself at the polls. You all must know that the Legislation of the State, in regard to the “free people of color,” is becoming more and more stringent, that every session of the Legislature adds one or more chapters to the statute book, curtailing, in

some degree, your shadowy rights and privileges. And is there any prospect that this policy of the State will be soon changed? None.

In your social relations to the whites, do you see any indications of improvements? I venture to assert, none—on the contrary, the line of separation becomes broader and broader every year. The more you advance in intelligence, the more you elevate yourselves, the nearer you assume an erect, independent position, the more obnoxious you become to the dominant race. Hence, your exclusion from many employments in the free cities of the North, and hence, the Legislation in various Northern States preventing your immigration.

As you can never be *citizens*, you must be considered *aliens*, although born on the soil, and the Legislature of the State consider your residence in it prejudicial to its interest; and although they freely give thousands and hundreds of thousands to remove you from it, and improve your condition when so removed, they will never consent that your residence here will be made more tolerable than at present. This seems to be the settled, acknowledged policy of the State under whose Government you live. Now, can you do anything to change this policy, or have you ever attempted it? No, notwithstanding the increasing stringency of the laws, you have never yet ventured to address the Legislature for relief—the surest evidence of your utter want of hope in this respect. As you have failed to petition or remonstrate, 'tis not to be supposed that you could ever entertain the thought of *resistance*. The alternatives, therefore, are, *to continue a life of base subordination, or to flee*. The case is fairly put to each and every one of you, and each and every one is responsible for the course he pursues. Individually, you may say, you have a *right* to remain, that your local attachments and your indolence overbalance the spirit of manhood in you, and you *will* remain. To a certain extent, and in a certain sense, as individuals, you may have this right, but collectively—not. As a body of people, under the like circumstances, your cause is one, and each one is bound to act for the good of all. Each head of a family is bound to act for the good of that family, and the parent, who permits his children to grow up under influences that tend to destroy every thing noble and great in them, has much to answer for, more than he can answer satisfactorily, even to himself, if he will but reflect. Just suppose, for a moment, that the remaining here affected the body instead of the mind and spirit; that it became dwarfed and stooping; that the limbs crooked, the senses paralyzed, and the whole skin foul and scaly—who would hesitate, for a moment, to leave a climate so detestable. Yet the effect on the mind is analogous. Your children are told that they can never arrive at any honorable distinction; that they can never perform any of the functions of government; that all the avenues of the higher walks of life, and even the mechanic arts, are shut to them; that, however great their capacities, they are doomed to a life of servitude in the lowest callings, that the basest white man living is politically and socially their superior, that from such a one they are liable to the grossest insults, which they dare not resist; in a word, that they are of a *doomed*

race—and will it not dwarf the mind, break down the spirit, and brutalise all the instincts of their natures? What course then is left you but to flee from the unequal contest? Go where you can become men—*free-men*—MEN, in the largest sense of the word.

In all this world, but one spot offers, what you would desire. No where else, but in LIBERIA, does the man of color live under a free Government of his own organization and administration. Go where else you will, and you but partially relieve yourself from the disabilities under which you now labor. In the free States of the North, you meet a stronger prejudice against your color than here, and in many places with a legislation depriving you of many kinds of labor, at present open to you. In Canada, you find it nearly the same, and actually the same, you must, sooner or later, expect from the same people—the Anglo-Saxon race. You cannot compete with the white man in the cold climate of the North. Remove every restraint, legal and social, and the superior energy of the European will ever surpass your best efforts, and confine you to the most menial employments. South, on this Continent, you cannot enjoy even the lower life granted you in your native State. You are prohibited by laws the most stringent, from even entering a more Southern State. The West Indies offer you a more desirable home than can be found this side the Atlantic; but in all, save Haiti, the Government is colonial, and the white man the land holder and superior in power. The Haitian Government is an absolute Monarchy, a Military Despotism; the French language only is spoken; the people debased and licentious, with whom you could and ought not to assimilate.

Africa is your fatherland, in which, through aid of a munificent philanthropy, your brethren from this and other states have founded the free and independent Government of Liberia—the merit of which, as a home for yourselves and your children, for all coming time, I propose now to examine. And let me assure you in the outset, that I will endeavor to divest myself of all bias or prejudice, in regard to this country or its people, feeling deeply the responsibility resting upon me, even should I be instrumental in inducing but one person to emigrate. In what I have said in regard to your condition here, you all know I have adhered strictly to the truth: what I propose to say of Liberia, I solemnly pledge myself, shall be no less true and impartial. I shall speak carefully and advisedly and only from personal knowledge. I shall neither fortify my statement by the testimony of others, although abundant, of the most respectable character, is at hand, nor shall I go out of the way to answer objections and false reports, whether trivial or of an aggravated character.

OF THE GEOGRAPHY OR LOCALITY AND CLIMATE OF LIBERIA.—The earth is divided into three parts, each having a peculiar climate, which, for our present purpose, I will designate as the cold, the temperate and the tropical. In the cold regions, winter prevails almost the entire year; there is little grass, no grains, few vegetables and no wood or forests. The people live principally on meat and fish, of which they have but little variety. They are generally very ignorant and barbarous, and few in number. In

the temperate regions, the seasons are of equal length, of summer and winter, spring and autumn. This is the region in which you now live. The soil produces many kinds of grains, fruits and vegetables; and animals both wild and domestic abound in great variety. This region is considered most favorable to the progress and perfection of the human race, and in it, around the whole earth, the white man is predominant and master. It embraces most parts of the civilized world of which you have heard or read in ancient or modern times.

The third region is denominated the Tropics, or warmer region, where Summer always prevails, and frost, ice and snow are unknown. This embraces the East and West India Islands, Central America and a greater part of Africa. In the Tropics are found fewer domestic animals and grains than in the Temperate regions, but vegetables and fruits in much greater abundance and variety, and of superior qualities; also, the great luxuries of mankind, sugar, coffee, spices, gums, &c. The Tropics are the most extensive regions of the earth, and in natural productions, animals, vegetables and minerals, richer than all the others. In Temperate regions, near one-half of man's life is spent in providing against the rigors of the seasons, warm houses, warm clothing and food for the winter. In the Tropics, necessity only requires that the dwellings should shelter from sun and rain; few garments and of the lightest materials are required, and there is scarce a month in the year, but food can be gathered from the earth. It is alledged, and undoubtedly true, that the delightful temperature of the Tropics, and the almost spontaneous bountiful supply of food from the earth, found in them, has tended much to deteriorate the races of men inhabiting this region of the globe—hence, the enslavement of your forefathers, and your present condition in this land.

The noble men who first projected the plan of providing a home for the free people of color of these United States, where they could exercise the functions and privileges so dear to all men, after much deliberation, wisely fixed upon the West Coast of Africa, where but a few generations back, your forefathers were born; in the rich Tropical world, and far removed from the influence of the white man. The country purchased, and now inhabited and governed by men of your own race, was named Liberia, or *Land of the Free*.

Of its position and extent, it is enough to say that it embraces some five hundred miles of seaboard, and extends inland from fifty to one hundred miles, or to any desirable extent; that not less than twenty thousand square miles are now under the jurisdiction of the Republic—say twice as much as is included within the limits of the State of Maryland. The country around it has a population of some hundred thousands of natives, who generally live on terms of friendship and good will with the American settlers, and are ready for annexation and submission to the Government; so that Liberia may be considered large enough to contain the entire free colored population of the United States, in addition to its present inhabitants.

CLIMATE.—I have said that uninterrupted summer prevails in the Tropics. In Liberia it is never so cold but the natives go naked, with the general exception of a piece of cotton cloth tied around the loins, or as I have known some mornings in July, in this country, nor so hot as are many whole days in every month of the summer here. The temperature is always about the same, and may be well expressed by the word *comfortable*. The changes are very slight, not half so great during the whole year as I have often known in one day of an American summer. One seldom suffers from the heat, except a little about mid-day, and then, by no means to the same extent as in the summer in this country. Notwithstanding the uniform warm temperature, which warrants me in saying, continued summer prevails, yet the year is divided into two seasons, the wet and dry. From November to March there is very little rain, and the grass is, more or less, dried up, the leaves of the forest are not quite so green and fresh, and vegetation generally, is at a stand-still. The rest of the year corresponds with our summer; during which, there are plentiful rains, and it is, as with us, the season of planting, growing and harvest.

FACE OF THE COUNTRY.—Throughout Liberia, immediately on the sea shore, the land is generally low, but very soon becomes elevated, rising in gentle undulations or swells, and nowhere, except on the borders of some rivers, inlets from the sea or lagoons, is the land low or marshy one mile from the sea beach—differing in this respect very much from the sea shore in Maryland and Virginia. From two to five miles, in a direct line from the sea, the land generally becomes hilly, and in fifteen or twenty miles, mountainous—such as you do not find in this State, except in the western counties. The whole country is well wooded and watered. Timber, not only such as you find in this country, excepting the varieties of the pine, but many other and more valuable kinds, fit for cabinet work, ship building, &c. The rivers are many, and some of them long, although none navigable over twenty miles, on account of falls and rapids. These are fed by innumerable small streams, brooks and springs. The water of all is sweet and good; no one ever suffers, even inconvenience, for want of good water in Liberia.

SOIL.—The quantity of timber generally indicates the richness and strength of the soil, and one only need to look at the immense forests, where trees from five to ten feet in diameter are common, and those of twenty feet are to be found, to know that they can only spring from deep, rich soil. But, were the soil less rich, it could not fail to be productive where the climate is so mild and uniform.

PRODUCTIONS, GRAINS, VEGETABLES AND FRUITS.—As you are only acquainted with the productions of this climate, or the Temperate region of the earth, I cannot well give you a correct idea of the productions of the Tropics, as some of their principal articles of diet are unknown to you. It is enough, perhaps, to say, that they far surpass those to which you are accustomed, in richness and variety. There are some, however, with which you are acquainted. Rice, a kind decidedly richer and

sweeter than that from the Southern States, may be said to form the main article of food to the native African. It is, in fact, his bread, for which it furnishes a good substitute. It is easily raised on either high or low land, being planted at the beginning of the wet season. The sweet potato is also known to you. It can be raised the entire year in Africa, and dug from the earth every month, for use. It grows much larger than in this country; I have seen specimens of it weighing twelve pounds each. Indian corn can be raised as easily as in this country, but is not much cultivated, both natives and colonists preferring other articles of food. Of garden vegetables, the Lima bean is much used by the Liberians—it grows most luxuriantly, the same stock producing several years, requiring little cultivation or replanting. The tomato and egg-plant are also indigenous to Africa, and grow there in abundance and of several varieties. Other garden vegetables, with which you are acquainted here, can be raised there, although they do not thrive well or produce seed—therefore are generally neglected, excepting, perhaps, cabbages. But the place of these is more than supplied by vegetables peculiar to Africa, with which you are unacquainted, and which no inhabitant of the Tropics would exchange for those you raise here. Among these the plantain and the cassada are the principal—either of which is often used as the sole and exclusive vegetable food by the natives for months. They, with rice, constitute not only the principal food of Africa, but of the tropical world. To describe them would be useless; 'tis only necessary to say, that they are raised with little labor, are healthful and acceptable as food to all, whether natives or foreigners.

The principal fruits of Liberia with which you are acquainted are the pine apple, orange, lemon, limes and cocoa-nuts, all of which grow in a wild state and under cultivation, and can be raised to very great extent with little trouble. The oranges are the finest in the world. There are a great variety of other fruits, of which you probably know nothing, as banana in variety, guavas, the mango, the alligator pear, the sappotilla, the sour and the sweet sop, paw-paw, tamarind, pomegranate, granadilla, rose apple, &c. &c. Some very abundant and in general use, others of less importance, but all making an extensive and delicious variety.

STAPLE PRODUCTIONS.—First in importance comes sugar, from the sugar cane, the same plant which produces it in the West Indies. No part of the world produces a better growth of cane than Liberia. I have seen over sixty acres ready for grinding in one field. Next, coffee, the "Liberia Mocha," as it is properly called, is the richest coffee known, and brings a larger price in market than any other. To these may be added, cotton, ginger, ground nuts, arrow root, pepper, indigo, and several others, of more or less importance. All of the above are mainly raised by the American colonists. But the great export staple of Liberia is palm oil, made by the natives of the country. This is a most valuable article of commerce, and is yearly growing in greater demand. It is not unreasonable to calculate that it will scarcely be second to any other in the world, in time—nor is it too much, to aver, that the

amount exported from Liberia alone, will, in a few years exceed in value the entire tobacco crop of Maryland. Camwood is another article of commerce, exported from Liberia, obtained in the interior, and sells from \$60 to \$100 per ton. To these staple exports might be added several others of minor importance, either now or prospectively, as hides, pepper, ginger, arrow root, gums &c.

ANIMALS.—The valuable domestic animals in Liberia are comparatively few. Horses are little used, none as yet being acclimated or domesticated, but are plentiful in the interior. They have cows, sheep, goats, hogs, the Muscova duck, turkeys and fowls. The wild animals are the elephant, leopard, sea horse, wild hogs, crocodiles, snakes, guanas, monkeys and several varieties of the deer, to which may be added innumerable smaller kinds, as chamelions, sloths, lizards, squirrels, rats, mice, many varieties of the ant, and other insects.

Thus, I have endeavored to give you a faithful, but brief sketch of the country called Liberia—its climate, soil and productions. I say faithful and brief, without one word of unwarranted qualification or praise. I will say, however, that it is such a country, that one born in it, never leaves, except upon compulsion. In my whole life, I never knew a person born in the tropics, voluntarily leave his native climate for a temperate one, such as you now live in—it seems to be a general law of nature, exceptions so few as only to confirm the law. While in any part of the tropics which I have visited, I never failed to find many people from the temperate regions, and however brief their intended stay, never did I know one that did not acknowledge the superior claims of the tropical world, and thousands who came but for a month or year have broken all ties of home, country and kindred, to live and die under its milder and soothing influences. Therefore, independent of government, association, your descent, position here, or any other special cause, Liberia offers you a more desirable, more charming home, than this land of your birth. But were this all, or the greater part, I should not now presume to address you.

THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA and its administration, are things most worthy of consideration. The colony was founded some thirty-five years since. A ship load of colored people, like yourselves, were the pioneers of this work. After various trials and hardships, attempting a settlement on other parts of the coast, they landed, purchased and took possession of Cape Mesurado, on which now stands the Town of Monrovia. White agents or governors were, from time to time, appointed to conduct the affairs of the colony. Ere long it was discovered, that the colony and the governor also depended mainly upon the ability and sagacity of the more intelligent of the colonists, and as a natural consequence, the Government fell into their hands. The colony became a State, a Republican State and one of its citizens was chosen its Governor or President. Years passed on, the second choice of the people is now their Chief Magistrate, and, thus far, the Government has been most ably and judiciously administered. Foreign nations have re-

cognized the existence of this little Republic—foreign ministers reside at its capital. Vessels of war of all maritime nations visit its ports, as also those of trade or commerce, and Liberia has a seat among the nations of the earth. She has all the institutions requisite for the growth and prosperity of a State, which you see around you in this country. They have common schools and higher seminaries of learning, churches of various denominations—a well organized militia for defence, and most of the mechanic arts are pursued, not excepting printing. They have open and unrestrained commerce with many civilized nations, and through their hands pass the great native productions of the interior before referred to, as ivory, camwood and palm oil. *All this is done and being done by men of color—every one of whom, once occupied the same position in this country that you now do—almost every one now there, and many others who have “fought the good fight, and finished their course,” have been recipients of the bounty of the Colonization Society, and gone out in its vessels, and been for a time supported and cared for by its Agents.*

MARYLAND IN LIBERIA.—I have spoken only of Liberia, in general, as a State or Republic; but it is proper, addressing people of Maryland, that I should refer, specially to what Maryland has done to promote the interest and secure the happiness of her free people of color. In 1831 she appropriated the large sum of two hundred thousand dollars, to be paid in annual instalments, to found a colony for her people in Liberia, and to remove such of them as were willing to go, and to provide for their comfortable settlement. Cape Palmas was purchased for this purpose, and a Maryland colony founded there. This now forms one of the counties of the State. What has been said of Liberia, as a whole, is equally applicable to “Maryland in Liberia,” as a part of that whole. As a place for emigrants from Maryland, I would specially recommend it, being peopled, as it is, by Marylanders. It is also considered by all visitors to the coast, as being the most beautiful and eligible settlement in Liberia, and it is certainly as healthy and salubrious as any on the seaboard.

I have alluded to your political or legal disabilities here, from the legislation of the State in which you are, as yet, permitted to reside. Of the character of this legislation, as to right or expediency, I presume not to offer an opinion; but whatever may be thought of it, certain it is, that the State has, in no way, abridged your rights, your privileges, or restrained your pursuit of happiness and worldly good, without tendering you more than an equivalent. During times of great pecuniary distress, the almost utter prostration of her credit, when other States, with greater resources, repudiated and became bankrupt, Maryland continued to appropriate large sums annually, for the benefit of her people of color; to prepare and keep in order for every one of you a good home, where you might be free from every restraint, excepting wholesome laws, every where necessary for the regulation of society and the protection of life and property; laws, too, made by your own brethren, and a Government administered by them.

What the State has done for those, who have seen fit to avail themselves of its bounty, and is now disposed to do for you, I will briefly notice.

The Maryland State Colonization Society, its Agent, offers to take you with what personal effects and movables you may have, from your residence, wherever it may be within the limits of the State, place you on ship-board, in a ship built expressly for the purpose, with every possible convenience and accommodation, to supply you with good wholesome food during the passage to Liberia, to land you, with your household effects, in care of their Agent, to furnish you with a good and comfortable house for six months from the time of your landing, to supply you for that time with good and suitable provisions, to guarantee you, when sick, good medical attendance and nursing, and in fine, to provide for your needs and wants, in every respect, during the said period of six months. You will receive, on your arrival, or very soon after, either a building lot in town, or a farm lot in the neighborhood of a town. You will be supplied with necessary farming utensils, and, if you have them not, household effects for cooking, lodging, &c. No demand will be made upon you for any remuneration or payment for these favors, requiring as they do, great outlay of money; and your time will be entirely your own, that you may at once provide for the future, building your houses, fencing and tilling your land and preparing for self support after the expiration of the six months. Such are the provisions made for you by the State's bounty, and such the Society now offers to you.

In enumerating the advantages of emigrating to Liberia, and a residence in the tropics, I have endeavored to state every point clearly, and put you in possession of all important facts, with one only exception viz:—the African fever, of which I will now speak. Every person, not born in Africa, is subject to an attack of a peculiar disease on going there, called the African coast fever, or acclimating fever. It varies in severity in different individuals, depending upon peculiarity of physical constitution, upon habits of life, previously, and after arrival in Africa. Some have the disease very lightly, not being deterred thereby from attending to the ordinary duties of life; the majority, however, are confined to bed from one to two weeks, and in some cases it proves fatal. Most are subject to one or two repetitions of the disease, but generally in a modified form, something like the fever and ague of our lower counties. Upon a fair calculation, loss by immigration from this disease is about the same as among persons removing from the Northern States, west, or from Maryland to the more Southern States. On the other hand, it must be remarked, that after becoming used to the country or acclimated, colored people do not suffer from this disease, and also that they suffer less from other diseases than they do in this country, especially those consequent on our winter season, which are unknown in Liberia. The only drawback, whatever, in emigrating, is this same African fever; but if we are warranted in ever construing the providences of God in regard to the affairs of man, we may consider this a most merciful provision, securing to the black man forever, this rich and extensive continent—for there and there only, does the hand of the white man cease to control. He cannot

prevail in that land. The disease of which I have spoken is a wall of fire around tropical Africa, through which the colored man passes comparatively harmless, but which the white man can never penetrate; therefore, as the land of Canaan was once given to the children of God, through his special interposition, so Africa is secured to the black man by his immutable laws.

You might possibly expect me to say more of the people of Liberia individually than I have, but it would amount to little, as I should, merely, be using names unknown to you. It is enough, perhaps, to say, that some of her principal men are Marylanders, having advantages of education and improvement, when they emigrated, in no way superior, if equal, to you whom I now address. The Dennis and Gibson families, members of which are now men of note, holding high positions in the Republic, were both from the Eastern Shore, their fathers hard-working farmers, without a trace of education. President Benson went from old Dorchester, a child of six years only, entirely educated in Liberia. The McGills, the most successful merchants there, were perhaps the only ones from this State who possessed even the rudiments of a common English education. What they are now, is in the power of any and every one of you, of like natural talents, to become by emigrating.

I am almost daily asked the question, both idly and seriously, if the people are happy and contented in Liberia? The answer might be very brief and true, "about as happy as people are, elsewhere." But I will answer the question more fully and more than answer it to you, and let the few words I say have weight, for they are true and cover the whole ground. As already stated, I spent near ten years in Liberia, knew, more or less intimately, most of its people at that time, received and had the care of many emigrants on their arrival, located them in their houses and on their lands; have since, for eighteen years, seen most of the emigrants depart, and also most of those who have returned to this country, from whatever cause; yet, believe me, *I have never known a man, of tolerable character and moderately industrious habits, who had lived two years in Liberia, that would leave it for any other part of the world, or that would, under all the circumstances of the case, prefer any other place, as a home, to Liberia.* I have heard of one or two such cases, only.

The general course with emigrants is this. On leaving home, getting on ship-board, and on the early part of their passage out, they suffer extreme depression from the combined influence of home-sickness and sea-sickness. As they get into the latitude of the Tropics, and feel the delightful influence of its balmy air, they become more cheerful. The sight of land excites them still more, and on landing they are delighted and charmed with their new home. Many a one I have seen kneel in rapture on the earth, and thank God that he has at last found a home. All that they see and experience for the first few weeks, generally increases their delight, and they then write glowing letters to their friends urging them to come out and join them. After a few weeks, the novelty of their situation passes away, the ordinary annoyances of life begin to be expe-

rienced, and fever takes the place of mental excitement. Their friends and family are also sick around them; they miss the care and attention of former friends, and many of the comforts and luxuries of their old homes. The fever leaves them low and nervous; home-sickness and remembrance of their far-off home, new diet, new habits of life, and new faces, not always the most kind and friendly, all tend to depress and dispirit them, and many is the emigrant who would at this juncture sell himself for life, if he could once more return to America—to his old master or mistress. Many indulge these feelings for a long time after recovery, nourish indolence and discontent, and disseminate the same among others. Sometimes months elapse before an effort is made to do any thing for themselves or their families, and oftentimes they never make an effort, but return in some vessel to this country, filling the land with reports of pestilence, starvation, Government oppression, slave trade, big snakes, monkey soup, and the like marvels. Others of this class, who cannot get back, after a while begin to come to, and cast about for some means of livelihood and often become good citizens. Another class, although they may suffer equally from the disease of the climate and other causes, never for a moment give way to depression, and soon get in way of thrift and usefulness. As a general rule, letters, written on first arrival out, are cheering and hopeful; for six months after the fever, despondent and whining, “carry me back to old Virginia;” a year after, “I could live here if I had so and so;” eighteen months, “right smart I thank you, sir;” at the end of two years, “I would not come back to live for the best farm in Maryland.” This is about a fair picture of the process which most emigrants go through; but this vacillation of feeling from hope to despondency, and the reverse, is mainly confined to the first year or two of African life. When once acclimated and settled down, the Liberian not only becomes satisfied with his new home and country, but ardently attached to it, proud of it, and ready to sacrifice his life for his Government. Nowhere have I ever witnessed a more strong and lively attachment to country, or stronger feeling of patriotism, than in the people of Liberia.

GENERAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE AND SOCIAL LIFE IN LIBERIA. It must be well known to you that the majority of those who emigrate are poor and ignorant. Many manumitted slaves, consisting of whole families, of both sexes and all ages, from the decrepid grandsire to the infant at the breast. Therefore, it is to be expected that a large proportion of the citizens of Liberia are poor people, many destitute, and dependent to a greater or less degree upon charity, either an extension of aid from the Colonization Society or upon the Liberians themselves, individually or associated. This must, of necessity, be the case. It is so in this and in all countries, and in many to quite as great an extent as in Liberia. But with ordinary health and even moderate industry, no one need want for necessary food, shelter and clothing. Taking the emigrants as they land let us see what becomes of them, as a general rule. First, orphan children; as said before, they are provided for by the Agent of the Society for six

months; they are then bound out as apprentices to trades, or with farmers, till they become of age. They are oftentimes adopted into families soon after their arrival. The next class—single men and women, without family connexions—these generally seek a home among the people or hire, in various employments. Sometimes the men till their land, build and make ready for a family. A third class, poor men with families and widows generally commence upon their lands at once, grubbing up, fencing, and building a house. It is remarkable, that men, and even women, with large families dependent on them, often do better than single men and women. Such, in a few years, have good houses, gardens and vegetable fields, while the single hireling is often as poor as on the day of landing. Lastly, those who have means, money or merchandize, with which to commence business, either mercantile, mechanical or agricultural. These, of course, are in a position to do well, with prudence and energy, and even ordinary capacities, and many of them do, but not uniformly. The small amount of money which a few emigrants possess, not unfrequently proves a curse rather than a blessing, as do large fortunes in this country, and although I am more disposed to advise those having money or means of independent subsistence for a few years to emigrate than those destitute, yet I believe the latter are quite as likely to do well as the former. A majority of the best citizens of Liberia left this county poor, entirely dependent on the bounty of the Colonization Society.

From one to three years after their arrival, a majority of immigrants are permanently located on their town lots or farm lands, under their own roofs, humble though they may be, and have around them many of the comforts and even luxuries of life. Their small farms lie contiguous to each other, the houses being almost within hailing distance. A small amount of land only is cultivated for family use, as it yields much more abundantly than in this country. As before stated, their gardens produce a great variety of fruits and vegetables. Comfortable farm-houses can be built for one hundred dollars, and even less, if the lot is well supplied with building material. Many of the farmers live in houses costing a thousand dollars, and some even more. Some houses in Monrovia cost as high as five and even ten thousand dollars.

The country people generally spend their time at home, working on their own land, grubbing, planting or getting out timber for their own use or market. The men do the out-door work, except digging and pulling vegetables, raising poultry and the like. They generally visit the towns or villages on Saturdays, which is a kind of market day, to make purchases, sell produce, &c. In the towns the greater part of the mercantile business is done in the forenoon, and I may say mechanical business also, for I am forced to confess to the indolence of the Liberian mechanic. Many of the merchants may be called wealthy—not in comparison with those of large cities in this country, but equaling many reputed well-to-do traders in country towns, and far surpassing what they could have been, had they remained here. Several of them live at very considerable expense, and most quite as well as they can afford.

OF PROFESSIONAL MEN, they have a few lawyers of very respectable attainments and standing; several well educated physicians, who obtained their diplomas from colleges in this country, and almost any number of preachers—some well educated, but the greater part without pretensions to more than a common school education.

Among the mechanics, are house and ship carpenters, boat builders, blacksmiths, masons, plasterers, coopers, shoemakers, tanners and brick-makers.

CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS.—In Liberia may be found churches of the most prevalent Protestant denominations in the United States, viz: Episcopal Methodist, Baptist, Protestant Episcopal and Presbyterian, in number and influence, nearly in the order named, and most of them have large missionary establishments, supported by societies in this country. They have in operation, both common and high schools for children of the colonists. I can say with confidence, that in no part of the world are greater facilities offered for obtaining rudimental education than in Liberia, and all too, free and gratuitous. There are also many *Charitable Institutions* in Liberia worthy of note and instrumental in doing much good, especially in Monrovia.

GOVERNMENT.—As before stated, the Government of Liberia is republican, or more nearly democratic, copied mainly after that of the United States and the free States of the North. No white person, or not of African descent, can become a citizen. Every colored male emigrant of twenty-one years of age, soon after arrival, is entitled to the privilege of citizenship, and eligible to office. Most of the officers are elective. The President holds the office for two years and is eligible for re-election. SLAVERY, or any form of *involuntary servitude*, except for *crime*, is entirely prohibited under the severest penalties.

THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION is also the same as in this country. The State depends entirely on the militia for defence. More attention is paid to drilling and parade than with us. The Liberians take a special pride in maintaining thorough order and discipline, and many—not only officers, but men—have signally distinguished themselves in various actions with the natives.

SOCIETY IN LIBERIA is subject to the same laws which govern elsewhere in civilized lands—wealth, intelligence and morality, one or all, are essentially requisite for admission to what is called the best society, and the *best society* in Liberia, so far as I can judge, in general deportment and manners will compare well with the *best society* in any other place of the same number of inhabitants, the same wealth and intelligence, and better than in most, without derogating from any other, for, if there is any one point in which your race excels, it is in ease of manner, genteel deportment and natural politeness, travestied and ridiculed as it often is, in garbled and broken English by the slang writers of the day. I have, more than once, been in mixed parties in Liberia, where white ladies and gentlemen, officers of the English and American navies, masters of merchant vessels and others, were present, and have never had occasion to blush

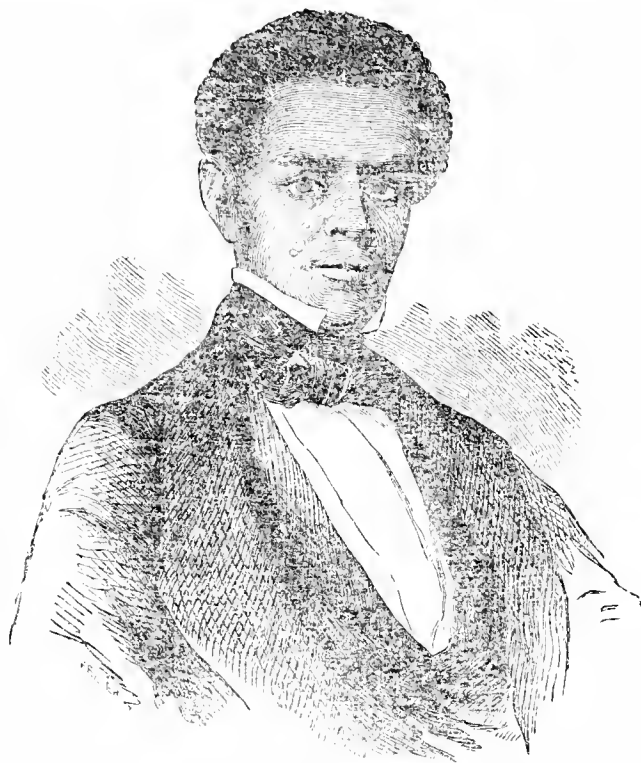
for any indication of ill-breeding or want of urbanity on the part of the Liberians; and never have they failed to receive courtesy and outward respect from their white guests, whatever may have been the feelings of the latter under other circumstances. I say, *this I have seen in Liberia*—can you conceive *that it will ever occur in America?* But the society of Liberia admits of the same variety as elsewhere. You will there find people of all classes and grades, from the President in his chair of State, to the drunken vagabond in the street, or the felon within the walls of a jail. If you emigrate, it will rest mainly with yourselves as to what class you will be associated with. There, the highest position, either political or social, is not beyond your reach. Your destiny will be, in a great degree, in your own hands. You cannot there say you are oppressed and borne down by law or by a dominant race. If you sink, it will be by the weight of your own worthlessness, the want of energy and ability to keep yourselves up. As liberty brings its blessings, so also it brings responsibilities, and do not expect to enjoy the former and shun the latter.

I have thus in a brief and imperfect manner gone over the whole ground, and endeavored to be perfectly candid and impartial. I have avoided all high coloring, either true or false, and even refrained from speaking warmly, as I always feel, of the charms of the tropical world; and, I think, underrated many of the advantages attendant upon emigration, feeling strongly as I do the responsibility I assume. In fact I have never seen fit to advocate or advise this step, except for one cause, or on one sole ground, *viz:—the advancement from a State of serfdom, of degradation, social and political, to that of Manhood and Freedom.*—Were I a colored man, fully possessed, as I am, of all the facts of the case, no other cause would induce me to emigrate, or leave this country, but, that in view, nothing short of death itself should prevent my doing so.—In the first place, a desire for my own personal liberty would impel me, next, that of my family, then, duty to my race—and lastly, to assist in controlling the destinies of that mighty continent of millions of people, and make their power properly felt in the earth.

I put the case plainly and fairly to you. Go for such motives, the highest that can influence man for worldly good! Go and live, the saviours of yourselves, your families and your people! or take the other and only alternative, stay and enjoy a living death, condemn your posterity to a like degradation, and entail on them the curse of caste; stay, and confirm the bold assertions of your enemies, that, "*The black man is only fit for a dependent state of existence—a serf and a slave.*"

JAMES HALL.

BALTIMORE, December, 1858.



JOSEPH JENKINS ROBERTS, from Virginia,
First President of Liberia, elected for four terms of two years each.



STEPHEN ALLEN BENSON, from Maryland,
Second President of Liberia, elected for two terms of two years each.



This Ship was built with funds given by Mr. John Stevens, of Talbot County, Md., for the express purpose of taking Emigrants to Liberia. She sails from Baltimore twice a year regularly, on the 1st days of May and of November. Any free person of color from Maryland is entitled to a passage and supplies for the voyage, without charge, on application to James Hall, Agent, Colonization Office, Second Street, Baltimore.

